SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard **July 22, 2010**

Present: Robert Ferguson, Jennifer Haskamp, Pat Igo, Rich Laffin, John Manning, Matt Mazanec,

David Riehle, Diane Trout-Oertel, Lee Meyer

Absent: Mark Thomas, Steve Trimble (excused)

Staff Present: Christine Boulware, Amy Spong, Joey Larson

PUBLIC HEARING

CALL TO ORDER: 5:05 PM by John Manning (Chair)

- I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA Ferguson, Trout-Oertel 8-0.
- II. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST None
- III. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS-None

IV. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS -

A. Statewide Historic Preservation Conference, September 16th and 17th. Sign up as soon as possible if interested.

V. PERMIT REVIEW/PUBLIC HEARING

A. University Avenue from Cromwell to Hampden, University-Raymond Commercial Historic District, by Metropolitan Council, Central Corridor Project Office, for permits to install artwork on the station platforms and for all streetscaping improvements associated with the CCLRT. File #10-003 & File #10-030 (Spong, 266-6714)

Staff read the report recommending approval of the application with conditions. Commissioner Ferguson had a question regarding the colors of light poles. This was requested by a past commissioner to differentiate between them and existing poles in the Lowertown district. Commissioner Laffin was concerned with the granite pavers that may or may not be reused and preserved. Engineer Dan Solar with CCPO addressed Commissioner Laffin's inquiry. If the pavers are not designated for a use, the contractor takes ownership of the pavers. Many aspects of the usability of the pavers remain to be seen when construction proceeds. Commissioner Manning requested more information of how the ownership of these materials is deemed. Mr. Solar explained that when pavers are salvaged they proceed to the city holding yard and if there is not a salvage plan, the contractor takes ownership. Alicia Vap with CCPO, expressed that the city already has a large abundance of recycled pavers in storage, and these existing pavers will not be needed. Ms. Vap proceeded to display some artist renderings and details of the laser cut etched metal that reside with the granite wheel sculptures. Commissioner Laffin commended the project office on the selection of the artists. Ms. Vap expressed her comfort with the staff recommendations on the project.

Public Hearing-Frank Brown, a local sculptor and artist, expressed concern on the granite walkways. It was explained by Ms. Vap that the walkways were going to be made of concrete. Mr. Brown commented on the topic of safety with these walking areas and that cross hatching is the best way to achieve a safe walking surface. Also, via letter, the Saint Anthony Park Community Council sent support of the median plan that incorporated the granite pavers and plantings. The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Igo motioned to approve the streetscape with the three staff recommendations. Commissioner Trout-Oertel seconded the motion. Commissioner Laffin added that safety must be taken into account and that the project office has made those considerations in the design. Also, the planting areas are well designed and pay some attributes to the NYC Highline project. The motion passed 8 to 0.

Commissioner Igo motioned to approve the artwork with the one staff recommendation. Commissioner Haskamp seconded the motion. The motion passed 8 to 0.

B. Fourth Street East from Jackson to Broadway, Lowertown Historic District, by Metropolitan Council, Central Corridor Project Office, for permits to install artwork on the station platforms and for all streetscaping improvements associated with the CCLRT. File #10-004 & File #10-031 (Spong, 266-6714)

Staff read the report recommending approval of the application with conditions. Commissioner Igo expressed concern about the tree mentioned in recommendation number four. Staff ensured that the existing tree will be shifted and replanted. Commissioner Laffin encouraged that recommendation three should be reconsidered and that all eight trees should be maintained in front of the depot. Staff commented that SHPO was involved in tree placement and that the pattern was well thought out during the 106 process. Commissioner Laffin also commented on the selection of Honey Locust trees and their expected growth height in an urban environment. Trees heights will be limited to approximately 30 feet and leave ample space for the planting of all eight trees. Commissioner Mazanec wanted to know about the decision of the placement of the bent streetlights. Staff responded that the amount of light necessary at intersections was not adequately met with the globe lights at those locations. The applicant, Alicia Vap, wanted to express her gratitude about the working relationship that grew with HPC staff. Her request to the recommendations was to reconsider number three and allow for the original number of trees in front of the depot. Her response to Commissioner Igo's question about the existing tree referred to in recommendation four is that a new tree would be planted in its spot and the existing one would not be replanted in that location. Commissioner Manning asked the applicant about the process of the tree placement and SHPO's involvement in the planning. She responded that in the planning meetings for the University-Raymond and Lowertown, SHPO, MNDDT, and PAM were consulted in tree placement. Their focus was to reduce impacts in front of historic buildings and that the numbers of trees in this plan are the same number and placement in the 60% plan that the HPC already reviewed. Also the number of trees in the rest of the central corridor plan are much higher than in these districts. Commissioner Laffin questioned the tree species and the applicant agreed with HPC staff that the selection was strongly recommended by SHPO.

Public Hearing-Katy Lindblad, of 300 Wall Street, wanted to reiterate the desire for trees, especially east of Wacouta where there is a transition from residential to commercial properties. Staff commented that there are no trees planned due to the narrowness of the sidewalks in that area. Ms. Vap knows there are limitations with the sidewalk width due to the introduction of the light rail. Artist Frank Brown wanted to know about the location of the park near one of the busiest intersections in St. Paul. He fears of safety and health concerns that are associated with urban environments. He suggested moving the park further away from traffic. He is also concerned with the limited parking for downtown residents. As a small business owner he feels as if customers will not have ample parking spots to come to his business. He suggested working with the Lowertown artist co-op and also looking into the aspect of underground parking for downtown residences.

Commissioner Igo motioned to approve the streetscape plans with the five staff recommendations. Commissioner Riehle seconded the motion and asked for clarification on Mr. Brown's park comments. Staff clarified that residents of the area showed a strong desire to keep the park where it is. Commissioner Laffin expressed a need for trees in urban areas and suggested keeping the plan at eight trees instead of the staff recommended six. Commissioner Ferguson mentioned that the proposed tree condition provided a consistent wall across from the Union Depot. Commissioner Meyer moved to propose a friendly amendment to strike recommendation three. Commissioner Igo accepted the motion along with the supporter of the original motion (Riehle). Commissioner Trout-Oertel concurred and the friendly amendment accepted. The motion passed 8 to 0.

Commissioner Meyer motioned to approve the artwork with the one staff recommendation. Commissioner Laffin seconded the motion. The motion passed 8 to 0.

C. 214-220 Mackubin Street, Hill Historic District, by Kate Hanning, owner, for a building permit to install two fiberglass front doors with side-lights and transoms at the property. File #10-032 (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the report recommending denial of the permit application. Commissioner Manning asked if staff has approved fiberglass doors in the past on front elevations and staff responded with no. The applicant, Kate Hanning, the owner of the property, asked the commission to consider the allowance of this alternate material because of cost and the manufacturer's recommendations for wood doors. She stated that the existing doors are fiberglass but are failing. Ms. Hanning expressed that she has invested nearly 120 thousand dollars into the exterior of the home already. Commissioner Manning suggested maybe holding off on the project until it is more in their means. Commissioner Riehle asked the applicant if she has had any other bids from other contractors. The applicant said she had not. Commissioner Laffin expressed that the concern about the manufacturer's recommendations would be greater if the door faced the south and not the west. He also suggested that the commissioners could provide the applicant with other contractors to get alternate bids that would hopefully be lower than the 10-14 thousand range. The applicant stated they would most likely stay with their current doors if the permit is denied due to cost. Commissioner Trout-Oertel expressed the importance of wood maintenance in preservation. There were no opinions offered by the public. Commissioner Meyer motioned for the approval of the staff recommendation. It was seconded by Trout-Oertel. Commissioner Riehle stated he was astounded by the quote for the wooden doors. He suggested exploring other bids. Commissioner Manning reminded the commission that they cannot recommend other contractors but can offer other agencies that could. Commissioner Riehle expressed his sympathy but reaffirmed the importance of not bending the guidelines to financial strains. It would counteract the whole concept of the commission. The motion passed 8-0.

D. 693 Wilson Avenue, Dayton's Bluff Historic District, by Lars Davidson, owner, for an after-thefact building permit review for the installation of metal entry-system at the front elevation. Work was completed without HPC review or a building permit. File #10-033 (Boulware, 266-6715) Staff read the report recommending approval with one condition. The applicant and property owner, Lars Davidson, claimed that the contractor completed the work without pulling the appropriate permits. He went with an aluminum entry system primarily due to cost. The cost differential between a wood and an aluminum entry was four to seven thousand dollars. He also wasn't aware that his property was in a historic district. The applicant talked to a contactor about the staff recommendation and the only option he saw was the utilization of an aluminum panel to help mimic the existing interior entrance. Commissioner Meyer expressed that there is not a successful way to alter this type of aluminum entry systems. The applicant attested to this through his findings with the contractor and manufacturer. Commissioner Manning suggested lowering the height of the sidelight transoms to mimic the glass sizes on the interior entry. Both Commissioner Meyer and Laffin expressed the concern of trying to alter this system in any way other than the installation of the panels on the sidelight areas. Meyer asked the applicant what his suggestions for the entry are. Mr. Davidson expressed his approval of the existing entry and requested it be allowed to stay in its current state and location. Other aspects of the building need to be addressed as well, and the applicant expressed interest in focusing on those areas in the correct way. Staff reminded that the role of the commission is to focus on the proposal on hand and determine if it complies with the guidelines. There were no opinions offered from the public.

Commissioner Mazanec motioned to explore the staff recommendation further and bring findings back to HPC staff. Commissioner Laffin seconded the motion. Commissioner Riehle expressed concern that the staff recommendation would not be feasible, although he does support the motion. The motion included that any exploration would have to come back for staff review. If applicant does not return to staff, the topic would come back to the HPC. The motion passed 6-2 (Igo, Meyer).

E. 214 Fourth Street East, Lowertown Historic District, by M.A. Mortenson Company, for a demolition permit for selective demolition which includes: areas of the train deck, both along Sibley and Kellogg; the concourse; areas around the head house, front plaza and carriageway. File #10-034 (Spong, 266-6714)

Staff read the report recommending approval of the application with five conditions. Staff also made a further recommendation for the HPC to address options for the carriage way. At a previous meeting, designers offered two options for the carriage way. The first leaves the existing original and adds a second carriageway that runs parallel to the original. The second option combines these two and results in one single arched carriageway with two lanes for traffic. At the previous meeting, the committee members preferred the second option with a single carriageway. At this point, it was necessary for the commission to express a preference for a single carriageway, not an approval for the design, but simply a statement of preference. Michael Bjornberg, the architect for the project, walked the commission through the carriageway proposals. He presented historic photos along with current graphics to show the existing structure. He expressed the need for a wider arch for transportation purposes. With this adaptation proposed for the carriageway, Mr. Bjornberg recommended the single arched carriageway to maintain the historic fabric of the space more accurately. He pointed out that this option provides functionality and gives a purpose back to the carriageway. Commissioner Trout-Oertel appreciated the designer's clear and concise explanation of the proposal. Commissioner Manning questioned the amount of green space that differed in the two proposals. Mr. Bjornberg approximated that around ten feet of green space differs.

From there the discussion moved to the remaining platform canopy and exterior stairs found in the rear of the depot. Mr. Bjornberg originally did not realize this structure was even present but through the 106 review a plan was developed to maintain the space in a number of ways. The plans of the station call for the removal of the rails that reside under this canopy. Mr. Bjornberg felt as if the canopy then loses its original purpose if maintained in the same location. He discussed moving it to the interior further and using it for its original purpose. He discussed bringing historical relevance to the canopy by possibly docking a significant transportation piece at that location such as a locomotive or train car. Commissioner Riehle questioned whether a train would ultimately come to this platform. Greg Brown, the engineer for the project from URS, explained the future layout of the track systems for the depot. The plan calls for a number of possibilities ranging from high-speed trains to simple commuter trains across the three platforms. The first platform would be built in a way for bus access as well. Commissioner Manning suggested more conversation on the train shed for a later date.

Public Hearing-Artist Frank Brown expressed his feelings for the design of the depot and how it does not properly reflect the artist community. He feels it resembles a warehouse. He also expressed concerns about the safety of the area and how people will cross the street. Also, he commented on a lack of concern for the Lowertown residents; he sees a problem with parking for these residents. Mr. Brown lives across the street at the Goeff and Howard Building and was displeased that those residents were not asked their opinion of the design.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel motioned to approve the demolition plan with the five staff recommendations. Commissioner Mazanec seconded the motion. The architect, Mr. Bjornberg assured the counsel that the front depot door will be reused. The motion passed 7 to 0. Staff suggested combining the FBIR and carriageway when they draft language. Commissioner Igo motioned that he preferred the single carriageway and encourages documentation. Commissioner Trout-Oertel seconded the motion. Commissioner Riehle supports the resolution. Motion passed 7 to 0.

VI. NEW BUSINESS—no new business was reported.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **A.** 3M Committee update (Trimble, Mazanec) Laid over
- B. Public Safety Building update (Manning, Igo) Laid over
 C. Public Art St. Paul Stewardship Committee (Laffin) Laid over

VIII. ADJOURN: 7:45

Submitted by: J. Larson